8:Shaw G-5 (ca.1930) 1932 FL11 Luo FL11

115 to write down the authorised version of whatever ceremonies it was
184 that I wished to describe. Moreover they warned me not only that customs differed slightly from clan to clan and location to location in North and Central Kavirondo, but that the Luo who had crossed the Gulf and gone to live in South Kavirondo differed in a good many ways from the Luo who had remained on the north side of the water. It must therefore be understood that the customs which I am about to describe are those of a group of Luo clans living in a small area in Central Kavirondo, and that there may be discrepancies between my account of these customs and those of other observers in other parts of the tribal area.

II. The Marriage Customs.

582 In the old days, before the Europeans took over the government
• 721 of the Luo country, it seems that a man did not normally marry until he was nearer forty than thirty, and girls did not marry until they were nineteen or twenty. In the case of a man this delay was apparently connected with his duties as a warrior. It was considered that a man fought better if he were free from the ties of married life. Though the Luo were never a fighting tribe in the grand manner like the Masai they had for some hundreds of years been pressing southwards through the surrounding Bantu tribes. Raiding for fresh land or even for cattle alone, and the consequent reprisals on the part of the raided, played an important part in tribal life, and every able-bodied man from the age of seventeen or eighteen up to the time of his marriage had to hold himself in constant readi-
541 ness for a foray. The term for a man of fighting age was *wuoro*,
885 that for a married man *jaiti*, while that for a man who delayed to marry until much later than usual was *mwanda*. After marriage a man seems to have been exempt from all warlike duties and allowed to settle down and devote himself entirely to his family life.

582 It is likely that this postponement of marriage to a comparatively
585 late age was, apart from its connection with the defence of the tribe, an instance of the reluctance of the older men to surrender even a part of their wealth and power to their sons. A man could not marry without his father's permission, for it was only from his father (except under special circumstances into which I need not enter here) that he could obtain the cattle with which to acquire a bride, and primitive fathers are often no more anxious than some civilised ones to part with large quantities of their worldly goods for the benefit of their children. There was, however, no hard and fast convention as to the age at which a man might marry. Circumstances altered cases. A mother, for instance, who was without an unmarried daughter, and who wanted another woman to help her in the household work and cultivation, might insist that her son should bring a wife into the family, even if he had not yet reached ordinary marriageable age. Again if there

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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765 she makes a new girdle from papyrus while still at the river, and wears it as she returns to her village. She is then free to remarry.

775 Dead people are sometimes said to come to life again. This is reported to take place within a short time after death. It is said that the spirit had gone on a journey and had returned after the man was thought to be dead, but in time to stop the funeral. The supposed dead person sneezes and revives, the sneezing being thought to be the signal that the spirit has returned from his journey.

764 **Death of a wife.** Should a wife die before her husband, her body is buried in the house, and, when the husband dies, he is buried in the goat-house near. He may not be buried in the same house with his wife. The animal offered at a man's funeral is always an ox, while it is an old cow that is offered at a woman's funeral. The skin from the animal is used to wrap the body as a shroud. The meat from the animal is divided in the following manner: a shoulder is retained for the dead and is eaten by the mourners at the grave, the second shoulder is for the relatives in the village, and the remainder, with the exception of the neck, is for the guests who live at a distance: the neck is given to the medicine-man.

766 A suicide is buried in the open, never in a house. Should the death have taken place in a house, it is burned down, for no one will live in it.

Warfare.

721 **Mode of conducting wars.** The people are not fond of war and fortunately their wars are never very serious matters. Cattle-lifting and women-stealing are the chief causes of fighting. The battles take place after short notice, when it is found that cattle have been robbed or when the alarm is given that a woman has been captured by some other clan. When a fight is impending, the attacking party drive a few cows to some spot where the other party may see them and challenge the others to come and take them. The party challenged must either attempt to carry off the cows while the others protect them, or they must pay a fine imposed by the attacking army.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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The warriors are armed with long-bladed spears and use large shields three feet high and of a V shape, behind which the bearer crouches and is completely hidden. The shields are made of cow-hide and are so dried that they are hard enough to resist a spear-thrust. Each warrior is painted with red and white clay in fantastic designs and wears a head-dress. Some of the head-dresses are like helmets adorned with ostrich feathers, while others are small straw hats such as a child's doll might wear.

The battle is decided when the cattle are carried off by the one party or when the other party prove themselves strong enough to retain them. The victors dictate terms of peace and the vanquished pay a fine in cattle and women.

Treatment of a warrior who has slain one of the enemy. When a warrior kills another in battle, he is isolated from his village, lives in a separate hut some four days, and an old woman cooks his food and feeds him like a child because he is forbidden to touch any food. On the fifth day he is escorted to the river by another man who washes him, a white goat is killed and cooked by the attendant, who feeds the man with the meat, the goat-skin is cut into strips and put upon the man's wrists and round his head, and he returns to his temporary home for the night. The next day he is again taken to the river and washed, and a white fowl is presented him. He kills it and it is cooked for him, and he is again fed with the meat. He is then pronounced to be clean and may return to his home. It sometimes happens that a warrior spears another man in battle and the latter dies from the wound some time after. When death takes place, the relatives go to the warrior and tell him of the death, and he is separated at once from the community until the ceremonies above described have been performed. The people say that the ceremonies are necessary in order to release the ghost of the dead man, which is bound to the warrior who slew him and is only released on the fulfilment of the ceremonies. Should a warrior refuse to fulfil the ceremonies, the ghost will ask, "Why don't you fulfil the ceremonies and let me go?" Should the man still refuse to comply, the ghost will take him by the throat and strangle him.

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

would have supplied sufficient food for the whole village (about 50 people) for 3 months. — When all the beer is finished the bridegroom's father asks his host whether his son may now build his wife a hut, and whether she may stay with him definitely. The worthy parent will answer: "No, not yet, because the heifer for the father of the girl *(roch wuoro)* is to be brought still."

Now the relations of the bridegroom go home taking a binding of the cow along, which is to be carried by the bride. But she will say: "It does not behove that I should walk along the road with my father-in-law; I will come later." Somebody of the party carries the leg, and she follows next day. Henceforward she is allowed to enter her mother-in-law's hut, where she does the cooking for her husband, and stays no longer in the simba. Unless she is with child already she goes home again after a few weeks, because her father has not quite released her yet, and she still plays about with her girl-friends.

When her husband has found the heifer still warmed by her father, he takes it to him. Again he asks leave to build a hut for his wife. If the father agrees he returns with his wife and starts building at once. The woman stays with her husband definitely, for the full dowry has been paid.

Some time later the woman's father brews beer and sends word to his son-in-law, who gathers his brothers and friends to go to this beer party *(kinch kongo)*. All of them except the husband himself go to the hut of his mother-in-law, where the beer stands ready. Not until he has given her either a goat or a sheep is he allowed to enter. This animal has to be handed over not by the husband himself, but by a relation of his. With this beer party the full marriage ceremony ends.

The woman, though she has her own hut now, goes on cooking in her mother-in-law's hut. Five months after she has conceived she has regularly to take *yuath agulu* which medicine has to be warmed up every time before taking it. This she does in her own hut. However, the evening before she boils this medicine for the first time, the children of the kraal pick some vegetables and cook them in the woman's hut. This is the first food cooked there. Both husband and wife, and also the children who cooked them partake of these vegetables.

From now onwards she cooks all the food in her own hut, but her husband is not allowed to eat any of it yet. He goes for his meals to his mother's hut. After about 4 days the woman goes home once more to fetch a goat for her husband. With the goat and also some other meat and fish she returns to her husband. When this food is cooked she calls her husband and the men of the village for a little feast. On this occasion she gives the goat to her husband, thereby sealing the contract with him *(oriso chwore)*.

Burial of a married Man.

In the olden days the death of a warrior was considered to be brought about by some enemy through witchcraft. This death had to be revenged. So the very next morning, before the man got buried, people got ready for a fight, and went out to the boundary of a hostile tribe to wage a war against them. No sooner was the warcry raised or the hostile tribe got ready too, and came to the boundary. Both parties took some of their cattle with them. After the fight the victorious party took the opponents cattle as spoils.

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764 Since the Administration of the country by the "White Man" these wars are a thing of the past. However, the old custom remains, in so far, that even at present on the morning after a person's death his relations and tribesmen have a sham-fight, at the same places where formerly they used to fight their real wars.

764 The wailing at a person's death spreads the news in no time, and at day-break all the men of that tribe attire themselves in their war-dress, after having smeared themselves with clay and mud, and go out with their shields and spears. They gather at the kraal of the deceased, and having brought some cattle they go out to the uninhabited boundary of their district for their sham-fight.

There the performance starts with the killing of a chicken as a sacrifice to the gods, that they might favour and bless their war, just as they did in the days of old. Whilst the old folks roast and eat the chicken the warriors dash forward to their imaginary enemy here and there stabbing a tuft of grass or throwing their spears at a bush, and rushing back again as if the enemy was on their heels.

When after an hour or two of fighting the enemy is defeated, they go back to the village of deceased. From the moment he gave up his ghost (and sometimes before that) the people of the village have been bewailing him, running in and out of the hut, shouting and yelling all the time. They have also taken his cattle one by one to the doorway of his hut, that they too might bewail their deceased master.

And now, after the warriors have returned, the corpse is put in front of the hut. The warriors and the people of the surrounding country (sometimes thousands of them, if deceased was a chief, a witchdoctor, a rainmaker, or other important personage) go up to the corpse, and bewail it, running in and out and round the kraal, all of them yelling like madmen.

The warriors also take their "spoils" up to the corpse, to show the spirit of deceased that his death has been revenged.

Whilst this is going on three men are digging the grave. If he was a rich man, i. e. if he had many wives, the grave is dug next to the hut in which he died, after a small temporary hut has been built over the spot. If he had only few wives then the grave is dug inside the hut in which he died. The corpse is lowered in the grave by 4 men, and the children of the village with their hands and feet scrape the earth into the grave, always with their backs towards the same. After the actual burial the wailing goes on for another half hour or so, whereupon all the outsiders return home.

In the evening the people of he kraal go to the grave with a chicken, which, held by the legs, is smeared with its head on the grave till it is dead. Then it is roasted and eaten. They also put a broken cooking pot on the grave, which they crumple to pieces there. Then they kill a sheep, which is eaten by the men that night. Its skin is cut into narrow strips. These are tied round the right wrist of all the male inhabitants of the kraal, and round the left wrist of all the females. This finishes the ceremonies for the day.

765 Next morning arrangements are made in the open space outside the village for a dance. The older women beat a couple of drums, the young women and girls from he neighbourhood dance, the men and boys in their war-costume run about

Besides dowry payments the Luo had other means of obtaining cattle before the advent of the Europeans. Two of these ways, which no longer exist, were the capturing of enemies' cattle during inter-tribal wars and robbery during the night. Because there were only few cattle in those days the number of cattle paid for dowries was very limited, not even half of what it is today.

Inheritance and exchange are now the natural means by which the Luo obtain cattle. As mentioned above in discussing dowry the first eight to twelve cattle paid for a dowry, though nominally known as the property of the father of the girl, are in the real sense the inheritance of her full brothers. The father can do anything he likes with them during his life-time, provided he consults the girl's eldest brother. It frequently happens that there is disagreement between the sons and the father, who may try to dispose of these animals without consulting the sons. The other animals belong to certain individuals, e.g., father, uncles and mother. Those of the father if he is a polygamist are inherited by one of his sons who has no sisters. If the father has two or more sisterless sons born of different mothers they inherit equally the special cattle he gets from the dowry of those daughters who have full brothers. These sons also inherit the cattle, goats or sheep that he gets by other means, e.g., those obtained by exchanging millet or maize and those paid to him for the dowries of his nieces. Cattle paid to the mother-in-law by her son-in-law are inherited by her eldest or last son. Usually a father gives more to a son whose mother has died if he is a good son. He calls this son his orphan. If a father loves one of his sons more than the others he may take some of his cattle to one or other of his friends, and tell him that they can only be taken after his death by the loved son.

A man inherits his brother's animals if the brother dies and leaves no son. If a man, having a brother, dies before having children by his wife, and the widow marries someone else of her husband's clan, children born to her by her new husband belong to the brother of her former husband, and so, if they are girls, the brother inherits most of the cattle paid for their dowries. If, however, these girls have a brother, he inherits the cattle.

Some people start to obtain cattle by exchanging their millet or maize for sheep, goats and poultry in the first instance, and when the number of these small stock has increased, they, in turn, are exchanged for cattle. Sometimes a man gives his friend an assurance that if he gives him some goats he will in return give a heifer which can be kept until she calves. After weaning, the calf remains the property of the friend while the cow is returned.